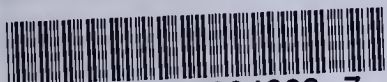


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# MANUAL FOR REPORT AND THESIS WRITING

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# MANUAL *for* REPORT *and* THESIS WRITING

BY

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NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

1930 — F. S. CROFTS & CO. — *New York*

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*First printing, September, 1929*

*Second printing, March, 1930*

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
BY THE CORNWALL PRESS AT CORNWALL, NEW YORK

## PREFACE

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This manual has been prepared particularly for the undergraduate who is required to submit reports or special theses. The author has tried to explain clearly and briefly the more important principles of research and the methods of presenting material. He has kept in mind the point of view of the undergraduate and has, therefore, made no attempt to give a complete discussion. He has, however, referred the students to standard texts on various aspects of the subject. In these they will find not only a more extended discussion but also numerous illustrative examples.

Bar  
From his experience the author has discovered that certain problems and errors recur consistently in the work of the undergraduates. He has endeavored to suggest a satisfactory means of solving the problems and eliminating the errors. He does not claim that the methods of this book are the only correct ones. But he has found them to be suitable guides for the undergraduate. It is preferable to give the student definite instruction rather than to allow him to choose one of several methods. He is less likely to become confused.

In order that this manual may be valuable to the technical as well as the academic student, the author has given examples of the mechanical form of an outline, a bibliography, and footnotes for a technical subject, *The Organization of the Sales Department of*

## PREFACE

*the NYS Radio Company*, and a general subject, *The Kingdom of the Lombards in Italy*. As these subjects are used merely to indicate the correct forms, he has not made either an exhaustive outline or bibliography.

The author hopes that the business man will also find many valuable suggestions in this manual. To some extent the difficulties which the writer of business reports encounters have been considered.

The author desires to express his appreciation for the suggestions and advice given him by his colleagues Dean Edward J. Kilduff, Professor William B. Cornell, and Professor Albert Sheppard of New York University.

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# REPORT AND THESIS WRITING

## *Chapter I*

### CHOOSING THE SUBJECT

*Survey of Possible Subjects.*—Whether the instructor has assigned a list of subjects from which the student may choose or allowed him unrestricted choice, the writer should make a careful survey of possible subjects in his field of study. He may find several topics which appear to be suitable. He should not choose one of these at random or accept the first suggestion. Many students have failed to do a satisfactory piece of work because they have chosen the wrong subject. Often the general knowledge obtained from the course will be a sufficient guide in determining the topic. It may be necessary, however, for the student to do some preliminary reading on several topics before he can decide which one has the requirements of a good subject.

*The Requirements of a Good Subject.*—The prime requirement is interest both for the writer and for the reader. Is their intellectual curiosity aroused by a contemplation of the topic? A student always gives his most earnest effort to a task when he has a sincere desire to know more about the subject. If he considers his report or thesis merely a means for obtaining a

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passing mark or a degree, he will write a most indifferent report. The interest of the writer depends largely upon the attitude he assumes. The interest of the reader will depend upon the presentation.

The second requirement concerns the amount and availability of the sources of material. Students have frequently found that a subject in which they were very much interested proved to be an unfortunate choice because the sources of information were scanty. The length of time allowed for investigation did not permit them to make a protracted research. They were not in a position to consult original manuscripts or make an extended study. Sometimes the material is not readily accessible. It may be in manuscripts in special collections or in private libraries or in books out of print. Such material cannot be obtained without considerable expense in time and money. Perhaps the material may be of a confidential nature, and those having the information will be loath to give it. This condition frequently arises when a student wishes to make a report upon business conditions or current events. Organizations and governments may wish to guard zealously their practices and policies.

If the student wishes to do original work, he must determine how fully the subject has been covered. Does some aspect offer the opportunity for further investigation? What parts have been neglected or superficially treated? A new treatment of old material may reveal unexpected elements in it. Hence the writer may extend the general information upon his topic and make a valuable contribution to the knowledge about it.

The final requirement of a good subject concerns its intrinsic value. Is the subject worth investigating?

The student is probably most interested in the immediate value to himself. A broader outlook will give him a more basic understanding of the subject. The relationship of his topic to the subject in general may help him to comprehend the whole course of study more fully. In every case a detailed investigation of a topic will help to prepare him for his profession or business. It will teach him concentration and inspire him to think. It will also train him in methods of study and presentation of material.

Reports read and discussed in seminar classes have further value. They may bring new points of view and stimulate others to productive thinking. A subject which fosters discussion is surely of great general value not only in itself but also in its by-products. No student should waste his own time or that of his classmates upon an unimportant topic or a carelessly prepared report.

*Limitation of Subject.*—The tendency of students is to choose too broad a subject. The result is that their reports or theses are too general to be of much interest or value. After a general survey of the whole field the student must determine what part is most desirable for his purposes. Sometimes he cannot decide this question until he has done some preliminary work and made an outline. Every research worker will tell you that the ramifications of a subject multiply amazingly. A thorough study of an important section of a subject is infinitely more valuable than a general discourse upon the whole field. A report is not a rambling essay; it is a definite discussion of a particular subject.

*Wording of a Title.*—The title of a report or thesis is the name by which it is introduced to its readers. An

## 4 REPORT AND THESIS WRITING

appropriate and attractive title will make a good impression and insure a favorable attitude. A trite and ineffective title will discourage reading. The title should give some indication of the contents. It should suggest the general trend of the treatment. Therefore, it should not be too broad or too general. *Railroads, Athens, Outdoor Advertising*, or *The Steamship Business* are not good titles because they are too vague. *The Financial Policy of the New York Central, The Intellectual Life of Athens in the Age of Pericles, The Development of Outdoor Advertising*, or *Training for the Steamship Business*, on the other hand, are definite enough to inform the reader of the contents of the report and to arouse his interest.

A short title is preferable since it attracts the attention more forcibly than a long one. A long title appears unwieldy and gives the impression of heaviness. It cannot be comprehended at a glance. The title should not be confusing or demand study to make its meaning clear. Three or four main words or word groups compose the most effective titles, such as *Market Methods and Trade Usages in London, Stock of No Par Value*, or *The Causes of the French Revolution*. Compare these titles with the following: *Methods of Financing California Fruits with Special Reference to Marketing Control by Coöperative Organizations*.

The title must also be euphonious. An awkward combination of words results in a harsh sounding title. This fault is rare except in cases where nouns are used for adjectives. Thus *The Return Goods Evil in Department Stores* would read more smoothly as *The Evil of Returned Goods in Department Stores*.

The student should consider several wordings of his

title in order to determine which one is most satisfactory. After he has completed his report, he may find it advisable to revise the original title. Then he knows exactly the nature of his report and what he wishes to suggest to his readers by the title.

## Chapter II

### GATHERING MATERIAL

*Definition of Research.*—Research is diligent and thorough inquiry concerning a subject with the aim of discovering the facts and drawing conclusions from them. It means prolonged and industrious study. The student should investigate all sources of information and attempt to determine the value of the information he receives. Research is the search for true, unbiased information.

*Principles of Research.*—The word research suggests the most important principle—thoroughness. The student must undertake an exhaustive search for material. He must examine books, magazines, and special publications and sometimes seek interviews from authorities or business men. His aim is to obtain all the information concerning his topic.

In quoting or paraphrasing from his sources the student should be careful to be accurate. A misinterpretation may change entirely the meaning of a paragraph. Sometimes the omission of a single word will change the significance of a quotation. Every fact should be verified. When the student finds conflicting statements, he must determine which one is correct.

Another principle is impartiality. The research worker should start his investigation with an unbiased mind. He may formulate the conclusions he expects



to reach, but he should not allow this surmise to influence his consideration of the facts. The same set of facts can be made to prove opposite conclusions if they are considered in a biased frame of mind. Under such circumstances he may also give too much importance to a minor point.

The research worker is a judge weighing all pertinent material to determine its bearing upon the matter in hand. If he lacks good judgment, he will misinterpret facts. He will reach conclusions without sufficient evidence. The student must also use judgment in determining the relative importance of the various phases of his work. He should not give an undue amount of space to a minor phase because he finds it easy to obtain information about that phase. He must know what to include and what to omit. Poor judgment in presenting the facts may make his report worthless.

Finally, research demands systematic work. The student should plan his method of approach and manner of investigation. He cannot expect success if he goes at his work haphazardly. In such a case he will waste much time and energy. The remaining portion of this chapter and the two chapters following will give some suggestions for systematic planning.

*Use of the Library.*—A library is more than a collection of books. It is a storehouse of knowledge. The student should know his way around this storehouse and should be able to find quickly and easily the information deposited there. The value of the ability to find information was stressed in the *Report of the National Education Association* for 1890. "Knowing how to consult books for information is often of more

value than facts themselves. How to use books is of prime importance."

In his essay "Of Studies" Lord Bacon said that "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention." How can we decide in what way we should read a book? From a superficial examination of a book we may gain a fair indication of its contents.

*Parts of a Book.*—In making such an examination we must consider the parts of a book. From the title page we learn the subject of the book, the name of the author, his degrees and position, which indicate his authority for writing on the subject, the publisher, and the place and date of publication. The reputation of the publisher will aid us to some extent in judging the value of a book. I once heard a librarian say that a certain book must be an adequate presentation of the subject because it was published by the Oxford Press.

The preface tells us the purpose of the author, the scope of his subject, and the method of treatment. The author may also give his sources of information and express his gratitude for any assistance given to him.

The table of contents is an outline of the subject matter of the book. If this outline is detailed, the student can determine what chapters or sections he should read carefully. Occasionally an introduction will precede the text. This essay further enlightens the reader upon the author's point of view.

Besides this preliminary material many books contain helpful suggestions in the last pages. Appendices,



notes, a bibliography, and an index inform the student about the contents of the text. If he consults these parts of a book, he has a fair idea of its value to him.

*Card Catalogs.*—The first step in gathering material is to consult the card catalog of the university library or the city library. Some of the largest libraries keep a file of the cards furnished by the Library of Congress. As a copy of every book copyrighted in the United States must be deposited in the Library of Congress, its card catalog is an important source of information. If you have access to it, be sure to consult it.

These card catalogs are classified according to author, title of the book, and subject. The cards also describe the format of the book and give the essential facts concerning the publication. Different libraries use different systems of classification. The student should become thoroughly familiar with the systems of the libraries where he is going to do his work. The system used by the Library of Congress divides all knowledge into twenty groups designated by letters of the alphabet. The Dewey System, used generally by small libraries, has ten parts designated by numbers. G. O. Ward's *Practical Use of Books and Libraries* contains many valuable suggestions for the research student.

*General Reference Books.*—For a general discussion of his subject the student should read the article in one of the standard encyclopedias. The date when the article was written and the authority of the writer will help him to determine its value. The bibliographical references at the end of the article will provide a basis for further investigation. The four outstanding gen-

eral encyclopedias are *Britannica*, *Americana*, *New International*, and *Nelson's*. *Meyer's Konversations Lexikon* in German and *La Grande Encyclopédie* in French are the standard encyclopedias for continental Europe.

In addition to the general encyclopedias many special encyclopedias and dictionaries have been compiled. They cover such subjects as agriculture, art, religion, commerce, education, classical literature, authors, biography, music, psychology, politics, economics, and sociology. In this group may also be placed the atlases. *The Century Atlas of the World* and the *Rand McNally Commercial Atlas of America* are typical examples of the general atlas and the special atlas.

For current events the student should consult the annuals. The supplements to the encyclopedias and other year books, such as *The American Year Book*, review the important happenings of each year. The almanac published annually by the *New York World* is a handbook of general information. *The New York Times Index* should be consulted for references to newspaper articles.

Much valuable material is contained in magazine articles. To locate these articles the student should consult the periodical and subject indexes. *Poole's Index to Periodical Literature* covers the principal magazines published between 1802 and 1906. For more recent material the student may use the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, a monthly publication with an index in the December number, the *Reader's Guide Supplement*, the *Book Review Digest*, the *International Index to Periodicals*, and the *Annual Magazine Subject Index*. The *Industrial Arts Index* lists engineering, trade, and business periodicals, books, and pamphlets.

It also gives a list of the important technical societies. Some subjects have their own special indexes, such as *Agricultural Index*, *Legal Index*, *Engineering Index*, and *Public Affairs Information Service*.

Another class of reference books is the catalogs of books in print. *The United States Book Catalog* gives under author and subject headings the books published in the United States. The *Publisher's Weekly*, the *Annual Library Index*, and the *Cummulative Book Index* supplement the *United States Catalog*. They are valuable sources for the most recent publications. Since the research worker aims to have his thesis up-to-date, he should not neglect these books. Morely and Knight's *2400 Business Books* covers adequately business subjects.

For a more extensive list of reference books and handbooks on special subjects the student should consult the *New Guide to Reference Books* published by the American Library Association.

*Government Publications.*—The various bureaus of the United States government have undertaken extensive studies of special problems. The results of these studies have been published in books and pamphlets, which are distributed free or sold at cost. The yearly *Document Catalog* and the monthly catalogs list these publications. The price lists give the publications on various subjects with prices. These may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

The government also publishes a *Census Abstract* and a *Statistical Abstract*. These books provide the student with accurate statistical information. Reports of federal, state, and municipal commissions are usually

very detailed and comprehensive. If they are properly indexed or divided into sections with sub-headings, the student will be able to locate without great difficulty the material he needs.

Sometimes we feel that these reports and the *Congressional Record* might be characterized by Shakespeare's description of Gratiano's reasons, "Two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff."

*Questionnaires.*—The questionnaire is sent to persons whose experience has given them some authoritative knowledge upon your subject. It also may be used to obtain the general opinion of a representative group. The sender of the questionnaire must remember that the receiver will consider the answering of the questions somewhat of a bother. His attention to the questionnaire is distinctly a favor to you. Unless he is very much interested in your subject, he is likely to answer in a perfunctory manner. He may, on the other hand, fear to give his opinions frankly. To overcome these obstacles you must explain fully your purpose and arouse a desire for coöperation. It is often wise to tell him that he need not sign the questionnaire. Another means of insuring more careful attention to the questionnaire is to offer to send a copy of the results. If the person from whom you are seeking information is a business man, he may find the results of your investigation not only interesting but also valuable. They may carry suggestions which will aid him in managing his business.

The explanation of your purpose may be incorporated in the questionnaire, or it may be contained in an accompanying letter. In either case it should consist of a brief, clear statement of the problem and the rea-

sons for requesting your correspondent for the information. A letter written in a frank, personal tone will bring a larger percentage of replies than a curt, formal one. You must be particularly careful not to arouse the suspicion that you may be going to use confidential information. If you do not state clearly and truthfully your purpose, few will reply.

In framing the questions you should consider the following points:

1. Are the questions clear? If they are ambiguous or vague, they may be misinterpreted, and the answers will be almost valueless. Framing questions so that you will obtain the answers you desire is an art. They must be briefly and definitely worded.

2. Are the questions easily answered? The most satisfactory type of questionnaire is that which can be answered by checking, by writing yes or no, or by a few words. Very little effort is required in these types.

3. Are the questions offensive? You cannot pry into a man's personal or business affairs. Even one offensive question may make him disregard the whole questionnaire. If you have any ticklish question, it should come at the end.

4. Are the questions placed in an effective order? Each one should naturally lead the reader to the next. He is, therefore, prepared for the more complicated topics. Questions requiring comments or the expression of opinion are more likely to be answered after the reader has a general idea of the subject.

5. Can the answers be easily classified? As you are probably going to tabulate the results, you should see that the answers are adaptable for tabulation. The questions must be distinct and separate. Overlapping



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will cause you considerable difficulty in compiling your results.

The mechanical make-up of the questionnaire should make a favorable impression upon the reader. If possible, your questionnaire should be contained on one page. Avoid bulk, for a long questionnaire suggests a hard task. The questions should be arranged conveniently so that the reader has plenty of room for his answers. If you are desirous of having the name and address of the person being questioned, it is well to place these as a heading to your questionnaire. This method gives the questionnaire a personal note. Also it prevents the reader from forgetting to sign the questionnaire.

In making up your list of persons to be questioned, you should be sure that they can answer the questions. Do not choose names from any source, such as a telephone directory. The persons questioned should be representative of their class or occupation. They should also possess adequate knowledge of the subject so that their answers will be authoritative. A carelessly compiled list means waste of time and money. Remember you want a high percentage of returns.

### *Sample Questionnaire*

The following questionnaire might be used to determine the value of advertising radio products in magazines:

1. What magazines do you read regularly?
2. What magazines do you read occasionally?

3. Do you read any technical magazines?
4. Do you read the advertising matter in the magazines or merely glance over it?
5. Check the following classes of advertising in accordance with your preference, using three checks for preferred, two for good, and one for fair.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Automobiles         | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing            | <input type="checkbox"/> Talking Machines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Products       | <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet Articles  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household Products  | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office Supplies     | <input type="checkbox"/> Watches          |

6. State in a few words your opinion of the effectiveness of the advertising in magazines.

Name ..... Occupation .....

*Interviews.*—The interview is similar to the questionnaire. In some ways it is more valuable because by personal contact you may gather more facts. Also a man will often take time to talk to you when he would not answer a questionnaire. His vanity is flattered to a certain extent by your seeking information from him as an authority. Sometimes an appropriate question will lead the person interviewed to give you facts you might never have thought of seeking. A man is inspired by an attentive listener.

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You should make a definite appointment for an interview, stating your purpose for the request. Do not take too much of a busy man's time. As far as possible keep to the subject of the interview. The person you are interviewing may have a tendency to ramble. You must tactfully bring the interview back to the main topic. Immediately after the interview you should write up your notes about it, for you must depend largely upon your memory. Many a man will feel constrained in talking about a subject if he sees that you are taking copious notes while he is talking. You should make only the briefest possible notes during the interview. You must give the person interviewed your undivided attention.

*Form of Bibliography.*—While the student is gathering material, he should make a bibliography. On the 3" x 5" cards he should note the name of the author, the title of the book, the edition (if there has been more than one), the publisher, and the place and date of publication. It is also wise to place the library call number on these cards for future reference. When articles in magazines are used, the name of the magazine and the volume number and date are given in place of the publisher and place and date of publication. These cards are called bibliographical notes. Notice the following points in regard to them:

1. The initials are placed after the surname.
2. The title of book or magazine is underlined.
3. The title of an article in a magazine is placed in quotation marks.



*Examples of Bibliography Notes*

Johnson, R. W.

"Survey of Merchandising Trends in  
the Radio Field."

Sales Management.

Vol. 8. March 21, 1925.

Cornell, W. B.

Industrial Organization and Manage-  
ment.

The Ronald Press Company.

New York. 1928.

Sedgwick, H. D.

A Short History of Italy.

Houghton Mifflin Company.

Boston. 1905.

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The cards should be classified and filed into three sections: (1) Books (2) Periodicals (3) Miscellaneous. Under each classification the material should be arranged alphabetically by authors or title if the work is anonymous. From these cards the final bibliography is made in the following form:

### *Short Bibliography for a Technical Subject*

#### Organization of the Sales Department the MYS Radio Company

##### BOOKS

- Bradford, E. S. "Market Analysis." Management's Handbook. The Ronald Press Company. New York. 1924.
- Cherington, P. T. The Elements of Marketing. Macmillan Company. New York. 1920.
- Cornell, W. B. Industrial Organization and Management. The Ronald Press Company. New York. 1928.
- Ferris, E. E. and Collins, G. R. Salesmanship. The Ronald Press Company. New York. 1924.
- Hall, S. R. Handbook of Sales Management. 1st ed. McGraw-Hill Company. New York. 1924.
- Hayward, W. S. Sales Administration. Harper and Brothers. New York. 1926.
- Hoyt, C. W. Scientific Sales Management. Woolson & Company. New Haven. 1913.
- James, H. L. Economics of the Radio Industry. A. W. Shaw Company. Chicago. 1925.

Maze, C. L. and Glover, J. G. How to Analyze Costs. The Ronald Press Company. New York. 1929.

Radio Industry. A. W. Shaw Company. Chicago. 1928.

Russell, F. A. The Management of the Sales Organization. McGraw-Hill Book Company. New York. 1922.

Tosdal, H. R. Problems in Sales Management. A. W. Shaw Company. Chicago. 1921.

### PERIODICALS

Edwards, W. B. "Adventures in Buying a Radio." Printer's Ink. Vol. 140. September 8, 1927.

Felix, E. H. "Planning Copy for the Radio Advertising Medium." Advertising and Selling. Vol. 9. May 18, 1927.

"Future of Radio Trade." Electrician. Vol. 98. April 8, 1927.

Johnson, R. W. "Survey of Merchandising Trends in the Radio Field." Sales Management. Vol. 8. March 21, 1925.

Sleeper, W. V. "How to be a Radio Salesman." Wireless Age. Vol. 11. February 1924.

White, T. "Merchandising by Radio." Domestic Engineering. Vol. 119. May 14, 1927.

### MISCELLANEOUS

Book of Facts 1927. Chicago Tribune, Chicago. 1928.

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Jones, L. T. Sales Manager XYZ Company. New York. Letter. January 20, 1929.

New York Times. 1926-1928.

Radio Industry. Report of Federal Trade Commission. Government Printing Office. Washington. 1924.

Smith, A. S. President of the L. C. Radio Company. New York. Interview. February 3, 1929.

### *Short Bibliography for a General Subject*

#### The Lombard Kingdom in Italy

Church, R. W. "Lombards." Encyclopaedia Britannica. 11th ed. Vol. 16. New York. 1910.

Hartmann, L. M. "Italy under the Lombards." Cambridge Medieval History. Vol. II. The Macmillan Company. New York. 1913.

Hodgkin, Thomas. Italy and her Invaders. Vols. V-VI. Oxford University Press. Oxford. 1916.

Paulus Diaconus. History of the Longbards. Tr. by W. D. Foulke. Longmans Green & Co. New York. 1907.

Sedgwick, H. D. A Short History of Italy. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston. 1905.

Trevelyan, J. P. A Short History of the Italian People. G. P. Putnam's Sons. New York. 1920.

Villari, P. Barbarian Invasions of Italy. Charles Scribner's Sons. New York. 1902.

### *Chapter III*

## TAKING OF NOTES

During the process of gathering material about his subject, the student has probably gained some idea of the value of the various books and articles he has listed in his bibliography. He should begin his investigation by a study of the most comprehensive. As he reads, he must keep adequate and convenient notes.

*Use of Cards.*—Cards are usually more satisfactory for this purpose than a note book or loose sheets of paper. They are convenient to handle and to file. 3" x 5" or 4" x 6" cards are the standard size for note taking.

On the first line of the card the student should place the subject of the note, followed by the name of the author, the title of the book or article, and the numbers of the pages from which the material is taken. This practice helps him later to verify quotations or statistics. It also furnishes him with the information for footnotes. It may save him a considerable amount of searching when he comes to write his report or thesis.

*Rules for Note Taking.*—Whether material is copied verbatim or paraphrased, the student must be accurate. A missing word or misplaced punctuation mark may change the entire meaning of a passage. The meaning of the author must be clearly and concisely expressed in the notes. They should not, however, be so concise

that they will be useless for future use. They should suggest to the student when he refers to them the essential facts or thoughts of the text. He should not copy his sources but employ them as a basis for his own presentation of the facts. Notes which are clear and suggestive will supply him with the necessary material.

*Method.*—The student should distinguish between the main and the subordinate points in the book or article he is reading. In text books and frequently in articles this task is done for him by the headings and subheadings of the various sections. The topic sentence of each paragraph will help him to formulate the headings for his notes.

The outline form of note taking is the most convenient. It saves time and space. Furthermore, the student is more likely to use his own wording in his report if he writes from outline notes. He should use ink, for pencil may blur and become almost unintelligible. He may evolve for himself a series of abbreviations to be used in his note taking. As his notes are his tools, he should make them as useful to himself as possible.

*Quotations.*—Instructors find that students are often careless in copying exact quotations. They leave out words or phrases. They forget quotation marks or fail to underline a word to indicate that it is italicized. Omissions of words or sentences in quotations are indicated by three periods, thus . . . It is customary to use four periods when the omissions immediately precede the beginning of a sentence.

If the student needs to add a word to make clear a reference to a preceding sentence not included in the quotation, he should place this explanatory material



in brackets. For instance, "He [the customer] will appreciate the special delivery service." "They [the Lombards] were unable to capture the fortified towns." A quotation within a quotation is indicated by single quotation marks in place of the double quotation marks used by the author. The student should compare the quotation in his notes with the original immediately after he has copied it to be sure that he has made no errors. At the end of the quotation he should indicate the pages of the text for future reference.

*Classification of Notes.*—The student should classify his notes according to some predetermined system. In most cases each main division will correspond with the chapter heading as it appears in the outline of his report or thesis. The headings on his cards will suggest the subdivisions. He may wish to classify his notes according to events, facts, or opinions he has formed. For historical subjects the chronological classification may be the most satisfactory. If a note might be placed under two or more sections, a cross reference should be inserted in the second and following places.

## Chapter IV

### OUTLINING

*Definition.*—An outline is a working sketch of the subject. It divides the subject into related topics and helps the student to determine upon an effective arrangement. It is a valuable guide to coherent writing.

*Value.*—The outline not only helps the student to detect poor arrangement. It also aids him in clear thinking and expression. Before he starts to write, he has a comprehensive view of the subject in mind. He can decide what points are important and how much attention he should give to the various parts of the subject. He is less likely to become diffuse and digress from the main idea if he is following an outline. He has before him continually the purpose for his writing and the conclusions to be proved. Thus he will develop his thesis or report logically and effectively. A good outline also saves time by eliminating to a great extent the need for extensive revision. The work of revising and of deciding what should be omitted can be done in the process of making the outline.

*Types of Outlines.*—The running or topical outline gives only the main headings. It is a preliminary draft to indicate the natural divisions of the subject. It should be made while the student is collecting his ma-



terial. It will be a guide for him in note taking, for it affords a general survey of the subject.

The final outline may take the form of an expository plan or of a summary plan. In the expository plan phrases are used for the headings and subheadings. In the summary plan complete sentences are used. The second form is more comprehensive but lacks conciseness. For the purpose of the student the expository plan is the most satisfactory. It is concise, clear, and sufficiently complete.

*Method.*—As the definition of an outline suggests, the method of outlining is the division of the subject into headings and subheadings. The student should write these down on separate slips of paper as they occur to him. He can then arrange them in logical order and place them under their proper main headings. While he is doing this, he may think of more appropriate or clearer wording. Barrett Wendell explains his method thus, "On separate bits of paper—cards, if they be at hand—I write down the separate headings that occur to me, in what seems to me the natural order. Then, when my little pack of cards is complete,—in other words, when I have a card for every heading which I think of,—I study them and sort them almost as deliberately as I should sort a hand at whist; and it has very rarely been my experience to find that a shift of arrangement will not decidedly improve the original order."<sup>1</sup>

*Form.*—In the expository plan all the headings should be phrases. The main idea should be conveyed by a noun which is the keyword of the phrase. Avoid finite verbs and infinitives and participles as far as

<sup>1</sup> Barrett Wendell, *English Composition*, p. 165.

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possible. Study of the following examples will show you the method and arrangement of a satisfactory outline:

### *Outline for a General Subject*

#### The Lombard Kingdom in Italy

#### I. Conquest of Italy (568)

##### 1. Causes

- a. Exhaustion of Italy from war with Goths
- b. Famine and pestilence
- c. Lack of help from Constantinople

##### 2. Campaigns of Lombards

- a. Plundering of towns
- b. Murders
- c. Repulse from fortified towns

##### 3. Settlement

- a. Establishment of military chiefs in principal towns
- b. Plain of the Po
- c. Failure to secure sea ports

#### II. Government

##### 1. Confederacy of chiefs

- a. Oppression of Italians
  - (1) Division of lands
- b. Opposition of clergy
- c. Dangers of internal strife
- d. Fear of enemies

##### 2. Election of a king

- a. Establishment of royal domain
- b. Strife with dukes

- (1) Attempt to strengthen central authority
  - c. Divine right
  - d. Gastaldi or royal stewards
- 3. Assembly of warriors
- 4. Collection of laws under Rothari (643)
  - a. German in character
  - b. Protection of poor
  - c. Systematic classification

### III. Characteristics of the Lombard Kingdom

- 1. Incomplete subjugation of Italy
  - a. Latin capital at Rome
  - b. Greek capital at Ravenna
  - c. Continual warfare with imperialists
- 2. Failure to amalgamate various peoples
  - a. Italians' hatred of Lombards
- 3. Invasions of Franks and other neighboring tribes
  - a. Plunder and destruction of country
- 4. Acceptance of Italian fashions and customs
  - a. Titles
  - b. Language
  - c. Religion
    - (1) Importance of Queen Theodelinda
      - (a) Mediator between Lombards and church

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- (2) Gregory the Great
- (3) Synod of Pavia
- (4) Contributions to monasteries
- 5. Importance of cattle raising
- 6. Intrigues
  - a. Poisoning of kings
  - b. Insurrection of dukes
- IV. The Lombard Kingdom at its Greatest Power
  - 1. Luitprand's conquest (712-744)
    - a. Extension of Lombard Kingdom to Bologna
    - b. Threatening of Rome
    - c. Subjugation of Benevento and Spoleto
    - d. Armistice with the Pope
  - 2. Aistulf's attack on Rome
    - a. Hard conditions of his armistice
    - b. Pope Stephen's embassy
    - c. The Pope's appeal to Peppin
    - d. Peppin's embassies
      - (1) Aistulf's refusal to yield
      - (2) Attack by Franks
      - (3) Treaty of 754
        - (a) Acknowledgment of Frankish sovereignty
- V. The Fall of the Lombard Kingdom
  - 1. Attempt of Desiderius to control the Papacy
  - 2. Marriage of daughter of Desiderius to Charles
    - a. Return of Charles' wife to Italy

3. Charles' descent into Italy
  - a. Treason of Lombard followers
  - b. Pavia (774)
4. Lack of organic unity in state
5. Crowning of Charlemagne (800)

*Outline for a Technical Subject*

The Organization of the Sales Department of  
the MYS Radio Company

I. Methods of Distribution

1. Direct to consumer
  - a. Advantages
    - (1) More definite presentation of product
    - (2) Better control of market
      - (a) Personal contact
  - b. Disadvantages
    - (1) Nature of product
      - (a) Specialty
      - (b) Installation and service
    - (2) Expense
      - (a) Salesmen
      - (b) Clerical force
      - (c) Shipping
2. Through wholesalers
  - a. Advantages
    - (1) Comparatively low cost
    - (2) Smaller number of accounts
    - (3) Larger single orders
  - b. Disadvantages
    - (1) Difficulty in determining reliability

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(2) Difficulty in controlling wholesaler

(3) Difficulty in maintaining prices

### 3. Through retailers

#### a. Advantages

(1) Service feature

(a) Demonstration

(b) Guarantee

(2) Reduction of credit risks

(3) Specially trained salesmen

#### b. Disadvantages

(1) Competition with product of other manufacturers

(2) Unreliability of retailers

#### c. Experience of other radio manufacturers

#### d. Types

(1) Radio stores

(2) Electrical stores

(3) Hardware stores

(4) Music stores

(5) Sporting goods stores

(6) Department stores

## II. Salesmen's Territories

### 1. Market analysis

a. Demand

b. Competition

c. Sectional differences

d. Need for educational work

### 2. Division of sales area

- a. Determination of individual sales territories
  - (1) Boundaries
    - (a) Distances between prospective dealers
  - (2) Transportation facilities
- b. Establishment of branch offices
  - (1) Branch managers
- c. Cost of selling

### III. Organization Chart of Sales Department

- 1. Sales department
  - a. Director of sales
- 2. Direct selling division
  - a. Sales manager
  - b. Home office
  - c. Branch office
- 3. Selling records division
  - a. Chief clerk
  - b. Sales section
  - c. Advertising section
  - d. General statistics
- 4. Advertising and sales promotion division
  - a. Advertising manager
  - b. Advertising section
  - c. Sales promotion section

### IV. Departmental write-up

- 1. General description
  - a. Scope
  - b. Name of department
  - c. Title of head
  - d. Location



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2. General duties of department
  - a. Determination of channels of distribution
  - b. Supervision of advertising and sales promotion
  - c. Selection and training of salesmen
  - d. Methods of selling product
  - e. Keeping of records
  - f. Preparation of reports
  - g. Co-operation with other departments
3. Duties of director of sales
  - a. Responsibility for carrying out general duties of department
  - b. Supervision of divisions of sales department
  - c. Decision upon sales channels and territories
  - d. Checking of sales costs
  - e. Analysis of reports
    - (1) Determination of actual selling costs
    - (2) General market conditions
  - f. Preparation of price lists and scale of discounts
  - g. Consultation with other officials on policies of company
    - (1) Manufacturing department
    - (2) Credit manager
    - (3) Treasurer
4. Opportunities for co-operation with other departments



- a. Possibilities of selling new products
- b. Suggestions of improvements to meet competition
- c. Reports on general conditions
- 5. Subordinate divisions
  - a. Direct selling division
    - (1) Sections
      - (a) Home office
      - (b) Branch office
    - (2) Duties of sales manager
      - (a) Selection and training of salesmen
      - (b) Supervision of salesmen
      - (c) Control of branches
      - (d) Suggestions for increasing sales
  - b. Selling records division
    - (1) Sections
      - (a) Sales
      - (b) Advertising
      - (c) General statistics
    - (2) Duties of chief clerk
      - (a) Preparation of comparative charts
      - (b) Study of conditions
  - c. Advertising and sales promotion division
    - (1) Sections
      - (a) Advertising
      - (b) Sales promotion
    - (2) Duties of advertising manager

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- (a) Determination of policy
- (b) Analysis of advertising

### V. Personnel

1. Qualifications of sales manager
  - a. Personal characteristics
    - (1) Pleasing and forceful personality
    - (2) Initiative
    - (3) Perseverance
    - (4) Confidence and enthusiasm
  - b. Technical knowledge
    - (1) Knowledge of product
    - (2) Selling ability
  - c. Managerial qualities
    - (1) Executive ability
2. Qualifications of salesmen
  - a. Personal characteristics
    - (1) Loyalty to firm
    - (2) Enthusiasm for product
    - (3) Attitude toward retailers
      - (a) Tact
      - (b) Helpfulness
  - b. Selling ability and technical knowledge required
    - (1) Experience in selling radios
3. Compensation of salesmen
  - a. Straight salary
  - b. Commission
  - c. Flat salary and graduate scale of commission
  - d. Method recommended
    - (1) Reasons for choice

## VI. Sales Policies

1. Distribution through retailers
  - a. Reasons for decision
2. Advertising and sales promotion
  - a. Types
  - b. Appropriation
  - c. Mediums
  - d. Character of copy
  - e. Class appealed to
3. Policies regarding prices and discounts
  - a. Prevention of price cutting
4. Policies regarding guarantee and service
  - a. Distributor
  - b. Consumer
5. Policies regarding change of style or design
  - a. Notification to retailers
  - b. Privilege of mark down

NOTE.—In this outline some of the subheads have been omitted in order to conserve space, as the outline is given merely to indicate the proper mechanical form.

## Chapter V

### MECHANICAL MAKE-UP

*Binder.*—The report should be placed in a binder or a substantial cover. In some cases a backing of heavy paper will be sufficient to keep the pages together. Whatever method you employ, you should be sure that the pages are securely fastened to prevent loss and disarrangement. A binder gives protection and insures durability.

*Title Page.*—In the center of the first page of your report should be placed the title followed by your full name. The word “by” should be omitted. At the bottom of the page should be placed the date. The instructor may desire you to place here the title of the course and hour of the class. A business report sometimes has at the bottom of the title page the words, “A report submitted to the XYZ Company.” It is not necessary to decorate this page with an artistic border or any other form of puerile decoration. Simplicity lends dignity to the title page.

*Preface.*—The preface is a short introductory essay. It states the purpose of the study, the limits set, and the method pursued. If the writer has received any special help or courtesy in gathering his material, he may acknowledge this service in the preface. The preface prepares the reader for an understanding of the report

by indicating exactly what the writer is trying to accomplish.

Often in business reports a letter of transmittal replaces the preface. This letter is addressed to the official of the company who has requested you to make the report. It gives essentially the same information as a preface but is signed with the complimentary close, "respectfully submitted."

*Table of Contents.*—The table of contents should be prepared from the outline. It contains the main headings of each section. The reader gains a knowledge of the material covered and the order of discussion by glancing over the table of contents. It is a summary of the report or thesis. The following examples show the usual form:

*Table of Contents for a General Subject*

| <u>Table of Contents</u>  | Page |
|---|------|
| Preface.....  | ii   |
| Conquest of Italy.....  | 1    |
| Causes—Campaigns of Lombards—Settlement   |      |
| Government.....   | 5    |
| Confederacy of chiefs—Election of a king—Assembly of warriors—Collection of laws under Rothari                |      |
| Characteristics of the Lombard Kingdom..  | 12   |
| Incomplete subjugation of Italy—Failure to amalgamate various peoples—Invasions of Franks and other neighbor- |      |

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ing tribes—Acceptance of Italian fash-  
ions and customs—Importance of cattle  
raising—Intrigues

The Lombard Kingdom at its Greatest Power 20  
Luitprand's Conquest—Aistulf's attack  
on Rome

The Fall of the Lombard Kingdom..... 25  
Attempt of Desiderius to control the  
Papacy—Marriage of daughter of Desi-  
derius to Charles—Charles' descent in-  
to Italy—Lack of organic unity in  
state—Crowning of Charlemagne

Bibliography..... 30

### *Table of Contents for a Technical Subject*

#### Table of Contents

|  | Page |
|--|------|
| Preface (Letter of Transmittal).....   | ii   |
| List of Tables.....  | iii  |
| List of Illustrations.....   | iv   |
| Methods of Distribution.....   | 1    |
| Direct to consumer—Through wholesal-<br>ers—Through retailers  |      |
| Salesmen's Territories.....  | 4    |
| Market analysis—Division of sales area   |      |
| Organization Chart of Sales Department   | 6    |
| Sales department—Direct selling divi-<br>sion—Selling records division—Adver-<br>tising and sales promotion division |      |
| Departmental Write-Up.....   | 9    |
| General description—General duties of  |      |



|  |    |
|--|----|
| department—Duties of director of sales |    |
| —Opportunities for co-operation with   |    |
| other departments—Subordinate divi-    |    |
| sions                                  |    |
| Personnel.....                         | 12 |
| Qualifications of sales manager—Qual-  |    |
| ifications of salesmen—Compensation    |    |
| of salesmen                            |    |
| Sales Policies.....                    | 15 |
| Distribution through retailers—Adver-  |    |
| tising and sales promotion—Policies    |    |
| regarding prices and discounts—Poli-   |    |
| cies regarding guarantee and service—  |    |
| Policies regarding change of style or  |    |
| design                                 |    |
| Appendix.....                          | 18 |
| Bibliography.....                      | 20 |

*List of Tables.*—In a technical report the writer often uses tables of comparative figures to prove his points. A list of these should be given in a form similar to that of the table of contents. When the reader uses the report for future reference, he may thus easily locate the tables.

*List of Illustrations.*—Sometimes the writer's ideas may be presented more clearly by illustrations or examples. This method saves much of the space and time which detailed descriptions would take. A list of these illustrations should follow the table of contents or list of tables.

*Introduction.*—The student may find it advisable to introduce his report or thesis with a brief essay giving the necessary background for a clear understanding

of his work. This essay may be a historical survey of the subject or an exposition of some special feature. It should not, however, repeat the material already given in the preface or anticipate the discussions of the text.

*Text.*—The text should be divided into sections or chapters according to the main headings of the outline. These headings are placed in the center of the page and capitalized. The main subheads (indicated by arabic numbers in the outline) should be placed at the beginning of the subdivisions discussing them and should be underlined as has been done in this manual.

The left hand margin of the page should be two inches in width. The subheads may be placed in this margin instead of at the beginning of the subdivisions provided that the binder does not cut off too much of the margin. If they are placed in the margin, they are not underlined.

If possible, you should have your report typewritten double spaced because a typewritten report is neater and more legible. A long quotation is indented with wider margins than the body of the text and is single spaced.

*Appendices.*—Appendices are used for supplementary material, which is interesting but not essential for an understanding of the subject. Sometimes illustrative material, such as forms or documents, may be included in an appendix.

*Bibliography.*—The form of the bibliography has already been discussed in chapter II.

## Chapter VI

### FOOTNOTES

*Purpose.*—The source of each direct quotation or table of statistics and the authority for each important statement, not a matter of general knowledge, should be given in footnotes. Footnotes are also used to amplify points which could not be further discussed in the body of the text without complicating the presentation of the subject. They are explanatory in nature and enable the reader to pursue the subject in greater detail if he so desires.

*Form.*—Footnotes should be separated from the body of the text by a line about four inches in length from the left hand margin. The footnote number is placed in the text at the end of a quotation or statement and slightly elevated above the line. In the case of figures small letters (a, b, c) may be used. The footnote reference for tables or graphs is placed after the heading of the table. The footnotes should be numbered consecutively for each chapter or main division of the report. In a short report or thesis it is not necessary to renumber for each section. Footnotes should be single spaced. The student should be careful to make the footnotes uniform in matters of punctuation, capitalization, and form.

The footnote containing the first reference to a work should give the initials and name of the author, the

title of the book, the edition if there has been more than one, the volume if the work is in two or more volumes, and the pages in the following form:

<sup>1</sup> T. Hodgkin, Italy and her Invaders, vol. V, p. 12.

<sup>1</sup> W. B. Cornell, Industrial Organization and Management, p. 130-132.

Subsequent references to the same work may be abbreviated in any one of the following ways:

<sup>2</sup> Hodgkin, V, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Hodgkin, op. cit., p. 30. (meaning work cited)

<sup>2</sup> Cornell, Industrial Organization, p. 184.<sup>1</sup>

If a footnote is immediately followed by a second one referring to the same work, the Latin abbreviation Ibid. (*ibidem*—in the same place) may be used.

<sup>3</sup> H. D. Sedgwick, A Short History of Italy, p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

In case a footnote refers to more than one work, the following form should be used:

<sup>5</sup> Cornell, p. 98; Maze and Glover, p. 130.

<sup>6</sup> Hodgkin, V, p. 50; Sedgwick, p. 33.

References to other types of sources than books should be in the following forms:

<sup>7</sup> New York Times, April 4, 1928, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> J. R. Smith, Interview, May 10, 1928.

When the student desires to refer to another section of his report or thesis, he should use the Latin preposi-

<sup>1</sup> This form is used when more than one work by the author is listed in the bibliography.

tions *supra* or *ante* (above or before) and *infra* or *post* (below or after) thus:

<sup>11</sup> Supra, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> Ante, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Infra, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Post, p. 16.

## *Chapter VII*

### ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

The value of a report or thesis is often increased by the use of illustrative material. The text is clarified and emphasized by pictorial representation and by the use of statistics.

These methods of presenting facts also save time, for at a glance the reader is able to grasp your point. He does not need to read a long description or to try to visualize what you have described. He is more likely to be convinced by the illustrative material. This material should not be scattered through a report merely to make it look attractive. The writer should refer in the text definitely to it and explain its bearing upon the subject.

*Types.*—Photographs, pictures, blue prints, and charts are the commonest forms of illustration. They show definitely the arrangement of an organization or the method and results of work done. They appear most frequently in yearly reports of social service organizations, such as hospitals and other institutions, and in reports recommending the reorganization of a concern or showing property or materials purchased. Photographs or drawings lend interest to almost any type of thesis or report. They are especially effective when they show comparisons between two periods of development.



Illustrations are numbered consecutively throughout the report with arabic numbers. They should be given specific headings. These headings are usually placed below the illustration.

Another very common type of illustration is the statistical method. Balance sheets and tables of statistics should have explicit headings, not merely Table I, Table II. These headings are placed above the tables and are numbered in Roman numerals consecutively throughout the report.

Standard units of comparison, such as dollars, feet, gallons, should be used. The headings for each column should be definite and not abbreviated. Any variation from the standard should be fully explained either in the text or in a footnote.

Long or complicated tables are to be avoided because they are confusing and defeat their purpose. As it is very easy to make errors in tabulating figures, tables should be very carefully checked for correctness. The student will find many helpful suggestions concerning this type of illustrative material in W. I. King's *Elements of Statistical Methods* and H. Secrist's *An Introduction to Statistical Methods*.

In historical reports and in commercial reports discussing distribution of products or location of plants, maps are convenient for conveying a large amount of information in small space. Maps may be colored or shaded to show degrees of variation or apportionment of territory. Flags may be placed upon them to indicate location.

Graphs of various types also are a very common method of presentation. They consist of lines or curves, showing relationships and trends. They give a

most clear and definite means of comparing increases and decreases in value or growth over a period of years. The student must be careful not to have too many curves upon a single graph. If the lines intersect too frequently, the graph becomes complicated and confusing. For information concerning the construction of graphs the student should refer to A. C. Haskell's *How to Make and Use Graphic Charts*.

Another method of illustration is the pictogram. Bars, squares, pyramids, and circles are the most common types of pictogram. They are simple and definite. They allow for a greater degree of comparison than the graphs. These types are valuable for showing various percentages and relative costs of production or distribution. In the use of these geometrical figures the student should be sure that they convey the impression he wishes. There is always the danger of misinterpretation on account of optical delusion. The student will find K. G. Karsten's *Charts and Graphs* and W. C. Burton's *Graphic Methods for Presenting Facts* suggestive in the preparation of these types of illustration.

*Method of Presentation.*—The illustrative material may be placed in its appropriate position in the text or may be collected in an appendix. In either case the student should refer to this material and interpret it for the reader. He should never consider the material merely a supplementary feature to add to the appearance of the report. If the illustrative material is not an integral part of the report, it should be omitted.

## Chapter VIII

### STYLE

The value of a report or thesis depends upon the style in which it is written as well as upon the material presented. A research worker may have collected much important information, but if he lacks the ability to present it clearly and effectively, he will fail to accomplish his purpose. Unless his ideas are adequately stated and his conclusions are definitely proved, he will not impress his readers. He must so write that his readers will have no difficulty in understanding him. He should write in a simple, direct style and should not aim to acquire a technical or florid style.

*Nature.*—"Style is the manner of choosing and arranging words so as to produce determinate and intended effects in language."<sup>1</sup> From this definition it is evident that style results from the choice of effective diction and careful attention to grammar and composition. Stevenson's statement, "I lived with words," bears further testimony to the importance of finding the exact word to express one's meaning. Herbert Spencer further developed this basic idea of style when he wrote that economy of the reader's attention results from "the right choice and collocation of words; the best arrangement of clauses in a sentence; the proper order

<sup>1</sup> J. F. Genung, *The Working Principles of Rhetoric*, p. 16.

of its principal and subordinate propositions; the judicious use of simile, metaphor, and other figures of speech; and even the rhythmical sequence of syllables.”<sup>2</sup>

Too much emphasis on grammar and composition may, however, result in a mechanical and artificial style, which will become extremely monotonous. The second basic element of style is the reflection of the personality of the writer. The style reflects the man. He must express his ideas in his own natural manner so that his style will not be stilted.

Considering both the mechanical and the personal elements, we may define style as the ordered expression of personal thoughts or emotions through one's own particular method.

*Qualities.*—The report should be written in a formal and impersonal style. The writer should attempt no imaginative flights or rhetorical flourishes. He is stating and explaining the facts he has discovered.

The first quality of such a style is clearness. The reader should be able to understand the report without having to puzzle out the writer's meaning. Unless the writer has his ideas definitely in mind, he cannot express them clearly to his readers. He must do the major part of the work, for he is trying to inform his readers and convince them of the truth of his conclusions. No doubt as to the exact meaning should be left in the mind of the reader. The writer must avoid complicated discussions and ambiguous statements.

The writer, however, should not go to the other extreme and use a style more adaptable to a first reader than to a thesis even though he is treating a technical subject. He should adapt his style to persons of aver-

<sup>2</sup> H. Spencer, *Philosophy of Style*, p. 4.

age intelligence. His readers probably know something about his subject and are desirous of learning more. They compose an interested audience seeking a clear and definite explanation of facts.

The second quality is accuracy. Vague and indefinite statements are almost as misleading as incorrect ones. Accuracy or precision of style is a matter of exactness and discrimination. A general statement may convey the wrong idea; it should be explained by a limiting expression. Specific and concrete terms should be used.

Another important quality is conciseness. Do not use ten words to express what you can say in five. Be direct and to the point, for you must not waste your reader's time. Verboseness will divert his attention from your message. Your thesis will be judged on the basis of quality, not quantity. At times, however, it may be necessary to repeat an idea to enforce it.

Smoothness of style makes a report more readable. The reader is carried along easily from one point to the next. This is the quality which Spencer indicated by "the rhythmical sequence of syllables." It is gained by an avoidance of the needless repetition of the same word, the jingling recurrence of the same sound, or a harsh combination of sounds. You can test your style for smoothness by reading aloud any seemingly rough passages.

A monotonous style is deadly. If every sentence begins in the same manner or is constructed on the same plan, your style becomes exceedingly mechanical. Some students overuse the compound sentence. Others have the habit of using numerous relative clauses. The student should acquire the habit of employing the different



types of sentences (simple, compound, and complex; loose, periodic, and balanced). Also he can gain variety by changing the order of phrases or words in a sentence. Stevenson gave to young writers this advice, "The one rule is to be infinitely various."

Finally, your style should have force or vigor, for this is the quality which holds the attention. Weak and meaningless phrases, such as *it seems, there is, in other words, and others, and so forth*, should be used sparingly. Another class to be avoided is that containing trite and overworked words. Every handbook and every stylebook contains a list of these hackneyed terms.

Descriptive and connotative words lend vigor to style. They carry in addition to their actual meaning the suggestion arising from association. Short, familiar words are vigorous. They should be used in preference to words of Latin or Greek derivation. Vigor is also gained by the omission of unnecessary words. This quality is the life-giving quality of style and impresses the idea more forcibly.

*Importance of Sentence Structure.*—The sentence is the basic unit of expression. Every sentence should express a single, complete thought. When it contains more than one main thought, it lacks unity. When it conveys a partial thought, it is fragmentary. Even though a sentence is unified, it may be difficult to comprehend because it is too long. Long sentences are frequently involved and demand extra effort on the part of the reader.

The words and phrases should be so placed in the sentence that their relationship to each other is clear. Faulty reference is a most common error. The general



rule is, "Each word or phrase should be placed as near as possible to the word which it modifies."

Another very common error is the unnecessary change in subject in a compound sentence. This practice forces the reader to shift his point of view. He starts on one track of thought and then suddenly is shifted to another. The result is that the style becomes incoherent.

Lack of parallel structure also tends to break the even flow of style. Ideas of a similar nature should be expressed in a similar form. Change of form weakens the effectiveness of the sentence if it does not actually result in ambiguity.

The student should be careful to begin and end his sentences with important words. Connectives, such as *however*, *also*, *of course*, and *in other words*, should be placed within the sentence. The beginning and the end are emphatic positions and should not be occupied by weak words. Emphasis may also be secured by changing a word or phrase from its natural order. An adverb or adverbial phrase placed before the subject gains special attention.

Too frequent use of the participial construction also weakens sentence structure. In many cases a participial phrase should be replaced by a subordinate clause.

A complete discussion of the few errors in sentence structure just indicated and of numerous others, both rhetorical and grammatical, may be found in any good handbook. The student should consult Woolley and Scott's *College Handbook of Composition*, *The Century Handbook*, or Hotchkiss and Kilduff's *Handbook of Business English*.

*Importance of Diction.*—If the writer is to convey

his ideas accurately, he must have a good vocabulary at his command. He must know the significance of words and their shades of meaning. English is a language which has many words with similar meanings but with various shades of difference. In order to express his thoughts exactly, it is important for the writer to know these shades of difference. A good vocabulary reflects the writer's individuality because it supplies him with the distinctive word for his purpose. He can avoid trite, commonplace phraseology. A person who lacks a diversified vocabulary is forced to repeat the same word again and again. This practice causes his style to be ineffective.

In addition to a dictionary the student should possess one of the books of synonyms. The three generally recommended are F. S. Allen, *Synonyms and Antonyms*; G. Crabb, *English Synonyms*; and P. M. Roget, *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases*. Frequent reference to one of these books will teach the student to discriminate in his choice of diction. He will not find himself at a loss for the appropriate word.

The writer must, furthermore, consider the connotation of words. Some words through association have gained a particular significance. Thus the word *home* means more than a dwelling place. Its meaning is elevated by its connotation. Some words, on the other hand, have become vulgarized through association. They carry a disagreeable suggestion.

By giving much attention to diction the writer can not only present his meaning more clearly but also influence the attitude of his reader. If he uses concrete and specific words, he will inspire confidence in his ability. The reader will feel assured that the writer

knows what he is talking about. Suitable diction is a distinguishing mark of the style of experienced writers. It gives distinction to a report or thesis.

*Figures of Speech.*—The judicious use of figures of speech gives vitality to style. They emphasize an idea and impress it upon the mind. If they are taken from the experience of the average man, they clarify and simplify the thought. A figure of comparison may do more to enlighten the reader than pages of explanation. When children wish to describe a new experience, they compare it with a previous experience. They also have a tendency to personify inanimate objects in their play. Thus figures of speech aid the imagination in constructing a scene or feeling. They give a heightened effect to style.

As the style of a thesis is not a literary style, only a few of the various figures of speech are appropriate. Similes and metaphors are most suitable because they are figures of comparison. The simile is an expressed likeness between objects of different classes, while a metaphor is an implied comparison. For example, "The sales manager is like a general directing his forces" is a simile; "The sales manager is a general directing his forces" is a metaphor. A resemblance between the relations of objects is an analogy. "Some salesmen have the energy of a dynamo." Here the comparison is between the properties of the objects rather than between the objects themselves.

Personification is the figure which endows inanimate objects with life. It lends vividness to style because it suggests the power of feeling and action. "Trust old Dutch; she chases dirt" presents very vividly the value of Dutch Cleanser.

Figures of implication are less common than figures of comparison. Nevertheless they may often be employed effectively. Synecdoche is the figure in which a part is used to indicate the whole. We speak of *factory hands* to designate the workers. Metonymy is the use of a sign for the thing signified. In referring to the influence of newspapers we say *the power of the press*. A trade mark is often visual metonymy. Allusion to a famous person, historical event, or well known quotation may bring out an idea more forcibly.

Sometimes a rhetorical question will arrest the reader's attention. Such a question as "How many salesmen waste time through lack of system?" does not require an answer. The writer is merely trying to stimulate thought in a striking manner.

Among the rhetorical figures parallelism and climax are the most valuable in a thesis or report. The comparison or contrast between two ideas is made clearer by the method of parallel presentation. Climax is the most effective means of emphasis in the sentence.

In employing these various figures of speech the writer should always be sure that the figure is appropriate. It should aid the reader in understanding the discussion but should never distract his attention. Highly figurative language is likely to make a style over ornamental.

*Rules of Punctuation.*—Punctuation is to the eye what pause is to the ear. It indicates a natural stopping place and shows how long a pause should be. Proper punctuation helps to make a clear and effective style.

The following eight rules give the student the essential principles of punctuation.

1. Put a period after every complete declarative or imperative sentence. When you use a comma instead of a period, you have committed the comma fault.

*Wrong.* The manager was too exacting, therefore the salesmen were antagonistic to his policies.

*Right.* The manager was too exacting. Therefore the salesmen were antagonistic to his policies.

*Wrong.* The Lombards descended into Italy in a poorly organized horde, so they were unable to capture the walled towns.

*Right.* The Lombards descended into Italy in a poorly organized horde. So they were unable to capture the walled towns.

2. Never put a period before any sentence element which is the concluding member of a sentence, such as a participial phrase, an appositive, or a subordinate clause.

*Wrong.* The salesman sent in a very satisfactory order. Also a report on the credit rating of his new customer.

*Right.* The salesman sent in a very satisfactory order together with a report on the credit rating of his new customer.

*Wrong.* The Pope sought an alliance with the Franks. While the Lombards were threatening Rome.

*Right.* The Pope sought an alliance with the Franks while the Lombards were threatening Rome.

3. Put a comma between the clauses of a compound sentence when they are joined by one of the pure co-ordinating conjunctions (and, but, for, or, nor); otherwise use a semicolon.

*Wrong.* The sales manager should interview the prospective salesmen and he should note their peculiarities.

*Right.* The sales manager should interview the prospective salesmen, and he should note their peculiarities.



The sales manager should interview the prospective salesmen; he should note their peculiarities.

*Wrong.* The king was suspicious of the dukes, therefore he caused several of them to be murdered.

*Right.* The king was suspicious of the dukes; therefore he caused several of them to be murdered.

4. Put a comma between a non-restrictive relative clause and its antecedent. A non-restrictive relative clause is one which is not needed to complete the sense. It is merely explanatory.

*Wrong.* The system, which was inaugurated a year ago, has been successful.

*Right.* The system which was inaugurated a year ago has been successful.

*Wrong.* Charlemagne destroyed the kingdom of the Lombards which had been established over two hundred years before.

*Right.* Charlemagne destroyed the kingdom of the Lombards, which had been established over two hundred years before.

5. Put commas around parenthetical expressions.

*Wrong.* He did not however know the conditions.

*Right.* He did not, however, know the conditions.

*Wrong.* Jones the most important member of the group was unable to come.

*Right.* Jones, the most important member of the group, was unable to come.

6. Put a comma between a subordinate clause and the independent clause when the subordinate clause precedes the independent clause, but usually not when it follows.

*Wrong.* Because he holds an important position the chairman of the conference should be carefully selected.

*Right.* Because he holds an important position, the chairman of the conference should be carefully selected.



7. Put a comma before the conjunction in a series of the form a, b, and c.

*Wrong.* The Lombards were sturdy, rough and cruel.

*Right.* The Lombards were sturdy, rough, and cruel.

*Wrong.* He did not criticize the policies, methods or organization of the department.

*Right.* He did not criticize the policies, methods, or organization of the department.

8. Put a comma between two sentence elements which might be wrongly joined in reading.

*Wrong.* On the basis of this ideal plans were made.

*Right.* On the basis of this ideal, plans were made.

*Conclusion.*—Although the principles discussed in this chapter will aid the student, he can acquire a successful style only by constant revision. He will find as he rereads what he has written that a more satisfactory method of expressing his ideas will occur to him. The various texts on composition will give him valuable suggestions, but he will learn to write only by writing.

